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SUBJECT: COUNTER TERRORISM - UN DISBANDS WORKING GROUP ON
"RADICALIZATION"

REF: USUN 289

¶1. Summary. At a November 20 meeting, convened to discuss a proposal to establish a pilot information and Referral Center on Policies to Counter the Appeal of Terrorism at the UN Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) in Turin, Italy, UN Assistant Secretary General Robert Orr announced that the UN Counter-Terrorism Task Force's Working Group on Radicalization (WG) has been "disestablished". The focus will now shift to UNICRI programmes which will build on work undertaken by the Working Group. Francesco Capp, the Head of UNICRI Security Governance/Counter-Terrorism Laboratory, presented a brief overview of the project. End Summary.

¶2. Assistant Secretary General Robert Orr hosted the meeting, for representatives from a small group (approx. 20) of UN Missions. Among those present were Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Pakistan, Norway, Italy, Spain, France, UK, Algeria, and the United States. Orr explained that the group represented those who had expressed an interest in the problem of radicalization, either by responding to the request of the Working Group for written comments or through statements made during the September debate. Orr said that the Working Group on Radicalization had served its purpose by completing its report, issued in September (see <http://www.un.org/terrorism/workgroup2.shtml>). The Report draws on the 34 written responses from Member States to its letter of February 2008 inviting relevant information. According to Orr, the decision to "disestablish" the working group was made for internal and external reasons. He noted in regard to the latter that some governments had problems with the Working Group. The "construction of deradicalization" was a concern to some major governments. (Note: Egypt and Pakistan had been particularly vocal in their criticism of the fact that the group had been set up without consultation and said that it was perceived as focusing on Islam). Orr reported that UNICRI, a co-chair of the Working Group would take the work forward on this aspect of counter-terrorism. Notably, Richard Barrett, the third co-chair was not present at the meeting. (Comment: The U.S. provided most of the funding for this Working Group. In March, Barrett described a number of projects that it hoped to undertake (Reftel). There is no indication that these have been completed and the "First Report of the Working Group on Radicalization and Extremism that lead to Terrorism: Inventory of State Programmes" is apparently its last. End Comment).

¶3. Francisco Capp described UNICRI as a research oriented organization which has demonstrated competence and interest to work in the counter-terrorism area. He said UNICRI is committed to an innovative, dynamic and creative results oriented approach. The project would involve setting up an information referral center to "counter the appeal of terrorism". States could provide input concerning policies and programs in this area as well as the name of a government focal point. There would be links to scholarly articles and analytical reports. Access would be secure and limited to governments. UNICRI plans to hold regional round tables to

promote the project and hopes to convene a international conference to present the results of this pilot program. UNICRI will be seeking funding for the project and plans to present a proposal for potential donor states in the near future.

¶4. States present reacted favorably and noted that they will be interested in reviewing the terms of reference. USUN will provide additional information on this project when received.
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